

More Opinions

Women In Rectories

Editor:

The Courier-Journal of 9/17/75 urges us to "think about worrisome, morally financially logistically women in rectories."

I question your concept of rector living to be relative to ministerial effectiveness. The ordained accepts the interdependency of people, priest and bishop and lives accordingly. We need not worry about priests' moral relationships with female colleagues and might better develop our moral responsibility to those with whom we live and serve and to those we ignore and oppress.

Why presume that all ordained women will be unmarried? In Timothy's time, bishops were married. The Kingdom of God is built co-creatively by nourishing community life and a sign of that is family. The priests directly cultivating such supportive life processes may provide reference points. Family members who do rise charismatically should not be prevented by institutionalized celibacy from ministering with full priestly faculties after study, training and internship.

There are dedicated people in all professions who spend as much time, energy and faith as a celibate priest. Family life can also be a supportive ingredient in ministry. We can trust one "called" to learn from, strengthen and evaluate that base of support. Aloneness is not normative for full Christian life, to which we are all called.

Re: Financial Ramifications

Small Protestant and Jewish communities support their married and ordained leaders of prayer. Our priests are often willing to live as poorly as those they serve.

Celibate and married, women and men priests are needed to witness the Gospel, to counsel and heal, to nourish, to call to prayer, to celebrate life sacramentally, to proclaim the Word of God and through all to radiate God's love. The logistics of preparation and supply of society's transformers (those who are a sign of God's presence and who live as a sign of God's will) need the support of all of us — The Church — reflective of God's Kingdom. Let's get on with it!

Denise Mack
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Question Seen As Trivia

Editor:

How could a serious publication ever reprint such a piece of immature trivia as the Sept. 17 paragraph in the editorial column?

To use such a round-about argument questioning privacy arrangements if we have male and female clergy at the same parish is tasteless and unworthy of a newspaper that should be giving major, intelligent coverage to the ordination of women.

When the (day) arrives that everyone recognizes the spiritual and priestly equality in both sexes, as Christ has already done historically, such basic matters as housing can be settled with propriety.

Sharon Mills
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Editor's Note: The editorial in question was neither an argument for or against the ordination of

women. It merely pointed out that in such event, serious thought must be given in advance to how it will affect traditional parish rector life. We still don't think such planning can wait until "the day arrives."

Father Curran Rebutted

Editor:

In the Sunday Rochester Democrat & Chronicle (9/28), the Rev. Charles Curran, a Rochesterian, a professor of moral theology at the Catholic University, discusses sex with a reporter. Excerpts from the dialogue are hereby given along with my own criticism of what I regard as Father Curran's very dangerous, unscriptural, and, in most cases, completely arbitrary opinions.

Question: How can some sexual acts be sinful in the Sixties and perfectly okay in the Seventies?

Answer: Because we have a greater appreciation in ethics of historical and cultural changes. As new circumstances come along, what was right in one situation might be wrong in another. For example, theologians, like myself, are now urging the Church to change its teaching on divorce. In the past, economic and political factors influenced the Church's teaching. But now we believe marriage depends on the love union of couples, which is fragile and can break down.

Criticism: Fundamental morals do not change. Sex acts which were intrinsically evil in the Sixties are still intrinsically evil in the Seventies. This is the official belief and teaching of the Catholic Church. Father Curran offers not one iota of support for his opinion. He says that HE and other theologians are now urging the Church to change its teaching on divorce. A very modest and retiring person, this Father Curran. He says, "In the past, economic and political factors influenced the Church's teaching." In this day and age when Catholic theologians are turning to the scriptures with renewed dedication, Father Curran seems never to have heard of the severe and uncompromising injunction of Christ, "But I say to you, whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, commits adultery and he who marries her that is put away, commits adultery." (Luke 16/18) I have been ordained over 50 years and I have never heard of any economic or political factor which would cause the Church to rule out divorce in favor of the indissolubility of marriage. I do know that as soon as the Reformers broke with the Church, they found plenty of economic and political reasons for permitting divorce. For nearly 2,000 years the Church has upheld the sanctity of marriage because of Christ's words forbidding divorce with remarriage and because the family is the basis of society and the unity of the family is essential for spiritual growth in the family, in the Church and in the State.

Space has permitted us to evaluate only one of the nine questions and answers in the dialogue between Father Curran and the reporter.

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Let's Work For Simplicity

Editor:

Courier-Journal, (9-10-75), reports on Cardinal Dearden's talk to the Charismatics. He is reported to have said, "It is

imperative that all that is done (in the Charismatic Renewal) be related directly and positively to the authority in the Church." In other words, according to the Cardinal, if I want to be a good Christian, a follower of Christ, I must, first of all, be against contraception, altar girls, communion-in-hand, unprimatured books in the back of churches, and I must respect heaven knows how many dos and don'ts set up by Pope Paul and the rest of the Church hierarchy.

What Cardinal Dearden says is only a case in point. It is typical of what Pope Paul and most of our Bishops and Pastors think, and of what the layperson in the Church faces: Authority — all with capitals.

We have had a lot of conversation since Vatican II, and, in fact, since the days of Leo XIII, about lay participation in the affairs and decisions of the Church. Has it not for the most part been little more than conversation?

Except in rare instances, do we laypeople have a voice in the operation, policy making, establishment of disciplines or selection of hierarchy? Are we encouraged to express the thought that The Priest, or the Bishop, or, heaven forbid, the Pope could ever be wrong? To be sure, there has been a good deal of window-dressing with parish councils, pastoral councils and other gimmicks designed to give the layperson the impression that he has a part in running the show. How often are these things any more than sounding boards for the wishes of the clergy and hierarchy? — or for their egos?

What can we do about all this?

If there are things we do not like, we should not leave the Church; we should work from within, perhaps on a parish council, to correct the wrongs. We should be active, assertive, articulate Christians crying out

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against the things that dilute the Gospel message of love: the pomp, the ceremony, the pharisaical disciplines that are such a far cry from the love and simplicity that Jesus showed us.

Adolphe and Loe d'Audiffret
RD 2
Naples, N.Y. 14512

PILGRIMAGE

Canandaigua — The annual pilgrimage of the Fifth New York District, Fourth Degree, Knights of Columbus will take place Sunday, Oct. 12, at Notre Dame Retreat House. Ceremonies will begin at 2:30 p.m. with a parade.

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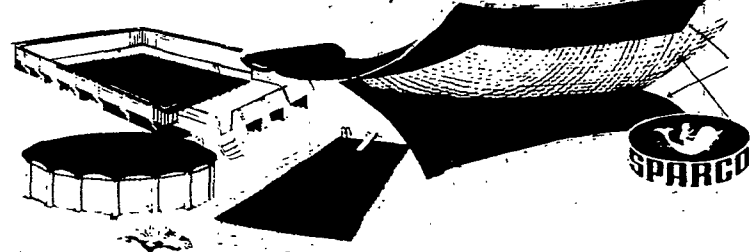
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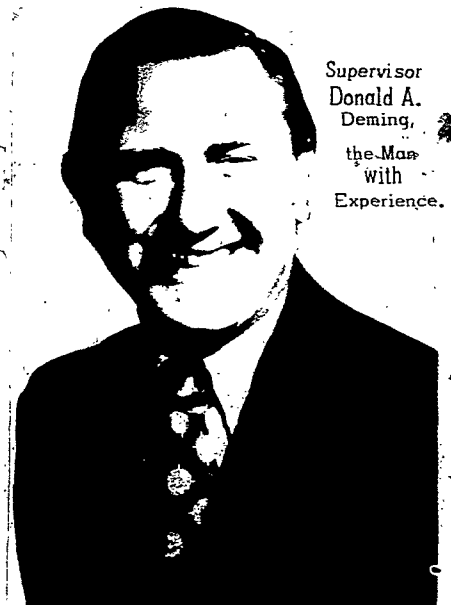
Town Supervisor

LET'S LOOK AT THE RECORD.....

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